(c) to (e) Since sanction will mainly apply to new aid commitments, continuing programmes will mostly remain unaffected. However, in conformity with the current policy of the Government, various measures have been initiated to encourage other private captital flows including foreign direct investment and investment by NRIs/OCBs.

The Union Budget, 1998-99 emphasized the need to make India strong and self-reliant and proposed measures to strengthen the foundations of the Indian economy to deal effectively with an inherently uncertain external environment. These include strengthening of the rural, agricultural, and small scale sector; accelerated development of infrastructure sector; special attention to social sector; export revival, and reduced reliance on borrowed funds; ensuring macro-economic stability and control over inflation; raise the rate of domestic savings and supplement it with foreign investment; eliminating bureaucratic hurdles and enhancing productivity.

Assistance to various projects by financial institutions

1429. SHRI E. BALANANDAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state whether Indian Financial Institutions including IDBI have assisted various projects in the States during Seventh Plan and Eighth Plan periods; if so, the details thereof; State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI R. JANARTHANAM): The Industrial Development Bank of India (IDBI) has reported that financial institutions including IDBI have extended financial assistance to various projects in different States of the country during the Seventh and the Eighth Plan periods. The details of assistance sanctioned and disbursed, state-wise, by all financial institutions during said plan periods are given in Annexure. [*See* Appendix 184, Annexure No. 46]

Farmers under income-tax net

1430. SHRI E. BALANANDAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to bring tfhe farmers into the Income tax net;

(b) if so, by when; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI R. JANARTHANAM): (a) to (c) Agricultural income cannot be brought to tax by the Union Government on account of the prohibition contained in entry 82 of the "Union List" (*i.e.* List I) of the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution of India.

However, agricultural income is aggregated with income other than agricultural income for determining the average rate of tax chargeable on income other than agricultural income.

Frauds in branches of Vysya Bank Limited

1431. SHRI O. P. KOHLI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 271 given in the Rajya Sabha on 16th July, 1996 and state:

(a) what action has been taken against the officials who passed the cheques whithout verifying specimen signature and issued the cheque books on fake documents bearing bogus signatures;

(b) what progress has been made in the last two cases in Karol Bagh and Chandni Chowk branches; and

(c) if no action has been taken/progress made in the cases, the reasons there-